



# THE NCO LEADERSHIP CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

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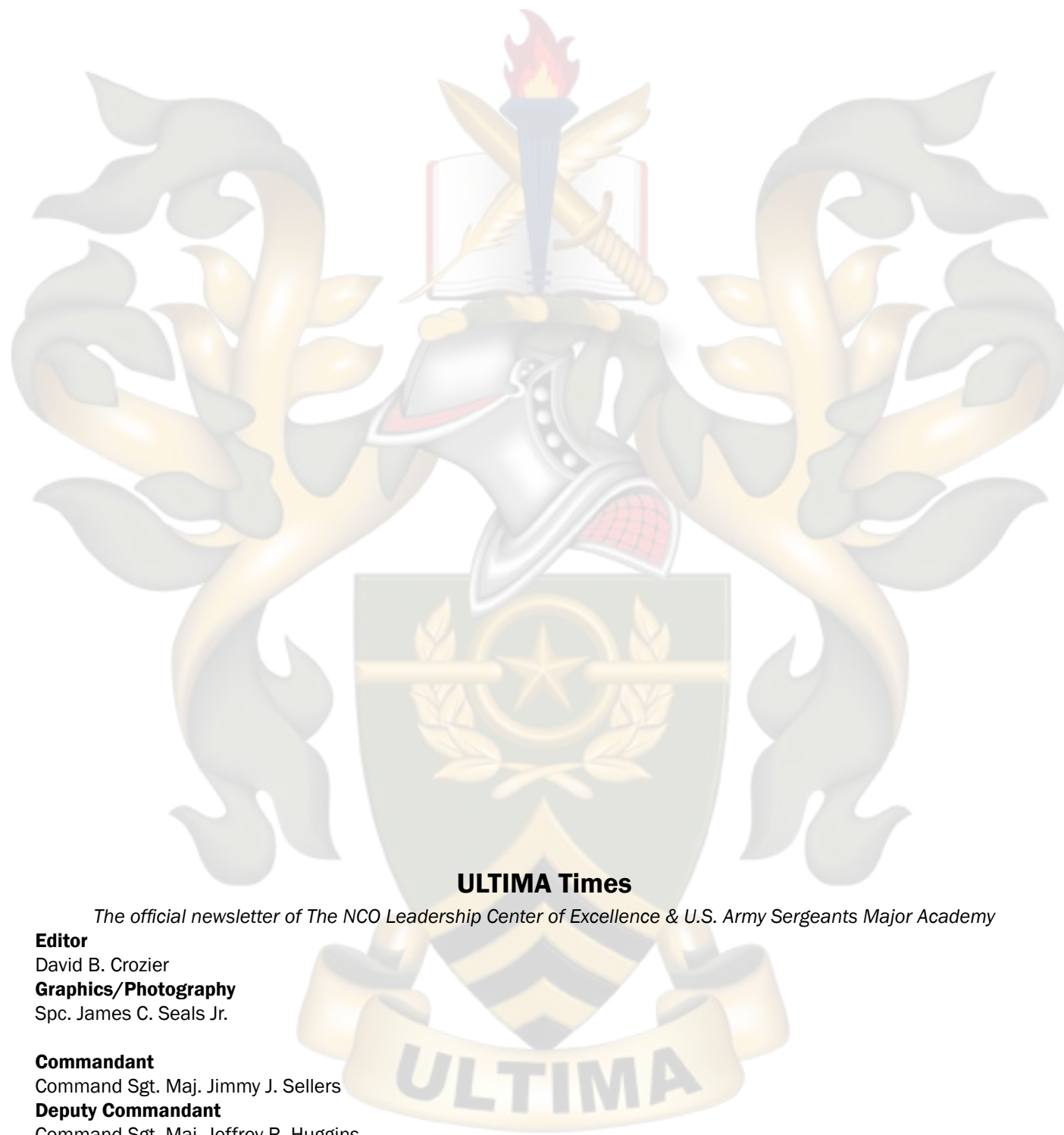
& U.S. ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY



## ULTIMA TIMES

FEBRUARY 2018





## ULTIMA Times

*The official newsletter of The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy*

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# THE NCO LEADERSHIP CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

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## & U.S. ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY

*“HOME OF NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER EDUCATION”*

“TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION THAT  
DEVELOPS ENLISTED LEADERS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF AN  
INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WORLD; AND DEVELOP LEADERS WHO ARE FIT,  
DISCIPLINED, AND WELL-EDUCATED”







Photo by David Crozier, Command Communications

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# A NOTE FROM THE COMMANDANT

Greetings from the home of NCO Education!

The last few months have been fast and furious! Nevertheless, we're making tremendous progress on the Basic Leader Course redesign, the writing program, and production of the Distributed Leaders Course, formerly known as Structured Self Development. In this edition of the ULTIMA Times, I would like to start out by publicizing USASMA's formal name change. Upon arrival into position eight months ago, I immediately took note of the remarkable responsibility USASMA has in developing, maintaining, teaching, distributing, fielding and advancing NCO education throughout the Army. With that, in January 2018 USASMA we obtained approval to change our name to The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence and U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy reflecting our actual mission. As most of you are aware this institution is also responsible for and serves as the proponent for the Basic Leader Course, Distributed Leaders Course (levels I-VI), Leader Core Competencies in all Advanced and Senior Leader Courses, and the Master Leader Course. These core functions of our mission and more, speak to the importance of the name change. The hard rollout and official unveiling of the new name will occur on 22 June during the graduation ceremony for Sergeants Major Course Class 68.

The present and near future are promising and exciting for our NCO Corps. It's amazing to have a front row seat in viewing the work we accomplish on behalf of the cohort. Personally, I would like to say thank you to The NCOL CoE & USASMA staff and faculty for their hard work and dedication in achieving mission success over the past few months. These professionals have made tremendous strides driving innovative change for the future. As teammates, I encourage you to be vigilant as we remain on this fast-moving train to keep NCO education relevant. Just know your hard work and efforts are making a big difference for our Army.

A few highlights since the last newsletter. We ended 2017 by hosting Branch Week from 4-8 December. Branch Week was designed to provide the Sergeants Major Course students with a broader understanding of each Career Management Field as it relates to the course curriculum. Each Training and Doctrine Command Center of Excellence command sergeant major and/or Proponent sergeant major formally briefed the faculty, staff and student body on advancements, future developments, career paths, and available broadening opportunities for Soldiers within their CMF. Branch Week was touted as being a huge success and will enhance the continuum of career-long education and improve the operational environment throughout each SMC student's future as sergeants major. We started the New Year recognizing over 53 SMC and Battle Staff NCO Course instructors by awarding them the Basic and Senior Instructor Badges. This recognition was well deserved and congratulations to all who earned the badge.

Over the past 90 days, we've had several distinguished visitors brief the Sergeants Major Course students on the direction the Department of Defense, as well as the Army, is going. We've hosted the Sergeant Major of the Army, Daniel Daily; Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Kaleth Wright; and the



Command Sgt. Maj.  
Jimmy J. Sellers



Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Command Sgt. Maj. John Troxell and his wife Sandra. All updated Class 68 and their spouses on a wide range of topics, including how as the senior most NCO assigned to an organization, you have the responsibility to provide sound, pertinent and relevant advice to Commanders and Staff counterparts.

Our Battle Staff NCO Course manager is looking at the current curriculum to determine the best way to redesign the course which includes education on FM 3.0, training management, and data and analytics from the previous course graduates. The initial redesigned course map is now in the review stage. Utilizing the input from student critiques, the course review will focus on immediate fixes prior to large changes. Throughout the redesign phase, we will query the force through onsite surveys with post-CTC and post-deployment BCTs across the Army formation. Moving forward, we will leverage our capabilities to ensure the redesign meets the needs of the Army.

The NCOL CoE is FOR Developing, Integrating and Delivering Education and Training Readiness. To date for FY18 NCOAs throughout the Army have graduated 5,850 Soldiers from the Basic Leader Course, 573 Senior Noncommissioned Officers from the Master Leader Course, 450 Noncommissioned Officers from the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officers Course, and we are on track to graduate 708 students from Class 68 of the Sergeants Major Course. The expert tutelage and professionalism of our facilitators has led us to graduate a combined 97% of Soldiers enrolled in the above-mentioned courses. If you are reading this and have not completed the required professional military education, I encourage you to work hard to get to school and complete the respective course. The education provided by our instructors is first-class and will provide you with the knowledge and capabilities required to operate in a complex and dynamic world.

Until the next update, take care and stay in tune to the latest developments.  
Ultima Strong!





# HERALDRY

The Coat of Arms for The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy was actually granted to USASMA on 5 January 1973 and is recorded in the Institute of Heraldry for the United States Army. It is made up of three distinct parts — Shield, Crest and Motto with the following descriptions:

**Blazon**

- Shield

Per chevron embowed abased vert and chevrony of six or and sable, in chief over a mullet enclosed by an open laurel wreath of the second a chain of three circular links fesswise throughout, the central link encircling the mullet, between the two outer links rimwise of all the last.
- Crest

On a wreath of the colors or and vert, a torch azure (dark blue) flamed proper, in front of a sword, blade to chief and quill pen, point to base, saltirewise all of the first, and all surmounting and extending over an open book with pages argent and binding gules.
- Motto

Ultima (The Ultimate).

**Symbolism**

The colors Army green and yellow and the embowed chevrons are associated with the basic device for the noncommissioned officers' insignia of grade. The gold links refer to the role of the Sergeants Major as the link between the enlisted men and the organization commander. The star which signifies command also indicates the high evaluation required by senior noncommissioned officers for the advanced schooling and training in the Academy, the senior NCO school. The laurel wreath, signifying past meritorious performance needed for selection, and the star and chevrons are all emblems suggested by the highest insignia of grade for noncommissioned officers; they denote the Academy's continued endeavor in training for the highest personal and professional achievements. The torch in dark blue, which was established as the National Color in Army Regulations 1821, is flamed to indicate zeal and together with the book signifies conveyance of knowledge and instruction in techniques required for enlightened leadership. The sword and quill pen represent both the combat and technical administrative services from which the Academy's students are selected.



Coat of arms



Crest



Shoulder patch

# JORDANIAN ARMY SEEKS TO EMULATE US NCO EDUCATION



The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy hosted a visit by the Noncommissioned Officer School of the Jordanian Armed Forces November 28 to hear about the country's efforts to build an NCO education system similar that of the U.S. Army. Above, Warrant Officer 2 Mohammad Al-Smadi (left), commandant of the Jordan NCO School, addresses Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy J. Sellers (center), USASMA commandant, and staff about the current status of the NCO education system in the Jordanian Armed Forces. The Jordanians are looking to emulate the U.S. Army NCO Professional Development System. (Photo by David Crozier, NCOL CoE & USASMA)

**By David Crozier, Command Communications**

The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy hosted a delegation from the Noncommissioned Officer School of the Jordanian Armed Forces November 28 in an effort to build stronger ties between them and the U.S., and to reach the vision of Jordan's Chairman of Defense in developing their NCO Corps to be like the U.S. Army's.

The delegation, led by Warrant Officer 2 Mohammad Al-Smadi, commandant of the Jordan NCO School and former Jordan Armed Forces Sergeant Major, met with Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy J. Sellers, USASMA commandant, and the academy staff to discuss the Jordanian's efforts in building an NCO Academy and educating their NCO Corps.

"We established our own Basic Leader Course after we saw the [U.S. Army] model of leadership training and we are now working on our POIs (Program of Instruction)," said Al-Smadi. "We are looking for input from our friends at USASMA about our NCOs because we are developing our academy system."

Al-Smadi said as their officer academy is run by officers, they are setting up their NCO Academy to be run by NCOs. He added that the meeting with USASMA had been very fruitful.

"We have a very good, strong relationship and friendship from our side with the American NCOs. A few of my team have graduated from the Sergeants Major Course and one from the Basic Leader





The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy hosted a visit by the Noncommissioned Officer School of the Jordanian Armed Forces November 28 to hear about the country's efforts to build an NCO education system similar that of the U.S. Army. Above, The Jordanian delegation (left) observes the conduct of a Basic Leader Course Class. The Jordanians are looking to emulate the U.S. Army NCO Professional Development System. (Photo by David Crozier, NCOL Coe & USASMA)

Course from this academy," he said. "We have taken away a lot and have had good meetings."

Sellers echoed Al-Smadi's sentiments about the partnership and lauded Jordan for their efforts to build an NCO education system.

"I think what they have is a pretty good product right now and we look forward to continuing to work with them and enhance their product," Sellers said. "I think this is important that we not only give them the tools to develop their NCOs and training development, but this partnership also gives us the opportunity to get over there with them, enhance our partnership base, look at what they are doing, observe them and then provide them with some constructive feedback."

Sellers added that partnerships and initiatives like this says a lot about The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & USASMA – that its arm is far-reaching, that USASMA can get out an help other countries because they respect our NCO Corps and its lineage.

"A lot of countries come to us for help and assistance. It says a lot about our capabilities, our passion that we have on Team USASMA. We have been doing a lot of things with Jordan for a while now," Sellers said. "They gave us some great insight about where they are at."

To date members of Jordan's military have attended the Basic Leader Course, the Battle Staff NCO Course, the Sergeants Major Course and one has attended the Commandant's Pre-command Course. During the meeting Al-Smadi and Sellers discussed increasing the numbers of Jordanian Soldiers attending US Army NCO Professional Development Courses, to include the new Master Leader Course.

"For us it is very important. We want to do something for our NCOs and our country," Al-Smadi said. "In maybe 10 or 20 years when we see the effect on our military, our army, we can say 'okay' we were a part of that. It's all about our nation, our army."

Sellers said The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & USASMA will support Jordan's efforts in developing their NCO education system.

"They gave us some great insight about where they are at currently in terms of their document development. So what we are looking to do is to work with them and make sure their doctrine and curriculum in their BLC course and some of their other courses remain aligned somewhat like ours," he said. "They would like to use our model – sequential, progressive and continue to build on one another. I think what they have is a pretty good product right now and we look forward to continuing to work with them and enhance their product."

The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy drive change for enlisted Soldier development and is responsible for developing, maintaining, teaching, and distributing five levels of Enlisted Professional Military Education – Introductory, Primary, Intermediate, Senior and Executive. Each level best prepares the soldier to fight and win in a complex world as adaptive and agile leaders and trusted professionals of Force 2025. You can learn more about the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & USASMA by visiting <http://usasma.armylive.dodlive.mil/>.

# BRANCH WEEK BRINGS CAREER MANAGEMENT TO FOREFRONT



Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy J. Sellers, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy commandant, kicks off Branch Week December 4 in the academy's Cooper Lecture Center. USASMA invited the 29 Career Management Field regimental sergeants major, Centers of Excellence sergeants major or their representative to USASMA to provide a capabilities brief for Class 68 and to meet informally with their Soldiers of their CMF to discuss career management, broadening opportunities and to answer questions from the students. (Photo by David Crozier, NCOL CoE & USASMA)

**By David Crozier, Command Communications**

The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy hosted 29 senior enlisted leaders representing their Career Management Fields for Branch Week, December 4-8. The regimental or Center of Excellence sergeants major, were asked to come to the academy to brief the students of Sergeants Major Course Class 68, as well as USASMA staff and faculty on the advancements and future developments of their career fields, career paths, and broadening opportunities within their CMF.

"Today is a big day for us," Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy J. Sellers, commandant of USASMA said. "We talk about the importance of knowing our CMFs, know what our right and left are doing. [These sergeants major] are here to brief us on what their CMFs do, what they are for and the way ahead."

Sellers impressed upon the students the importance to listen to every brief and when they had the opportunity to meet face-to-face with their CMF sergeant major, to ask the tough questions.

Sgt. Maj. Felice Murrell, operations sergeant major for the Sergeants Major Course, said bringing in the regimental or Center of Excellence sergeants major to conduct a capabilities brief for their CMF was a first for USASMA. She said prior to this event the students would obtain materials from their CMF and brief their fellow students in the class. The regimental or COE sergeants major would then come in from time to time to meet with the students after academic hours were complete.

"This is the very first time USASMA has actually conducted a Branch Week and additionally the first time the actual [branches briefed and] had the opportunity to break off into informal briefing sessions,"





Sgt. Maj. Mark Belda, sergeant major from the Office of Chief of Infantry, conducts an Infantry Branch Overview Brief during Branch Week at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy on December 4. He highlighted how the Infantry is the proponent for lethality, went over requirements for Infantry leaders to remain competitive, and discussed the Brigade Combat Team conversion. (Photo by David Crozier NCOL CoE & USASMA)

briefers have been talking about I totally understand it,” he said. “My vision stayed at an organization level, at the battalion/brigade level. I struggled at seeing the big picture. The way our line of efforts work you get trapped into this tunnel. ... We don’t get to see the broad picture.”

During Branch Week, each CMF sergeant major was asked to brief the entire Class 68 on their branch history, career management chart and credentialing opportunities, career progression trends for command sergeants major and sergeants major, and future developments for the CMF. At the end of each day’s briefing the students were grouped by their CMF and met separately with their sergeants major to allow for questions and answers and a more direct brief.

“Being at the academy I was definitely eyes open for seeing things in a much bigger perspective,” Santiago said. “With Branch Week I see things through a much larger scale. I think we are being prepared to see things in that multi-domain picture and this helps.”

Brown said Branch Week will help him to inform his Soldiers at his next duty station about the why.

“One thing I will do better of is the explanation piece. I feel that when you are given the mission you are just told here is the mission, task and standard, just get after it,” Brown said. “But with an explanation it helps to understand more and actually helps broaden your horizon as well. So, I will do better with the explanation piece when it is feasible to do so.”

The Sergeants Major Course (SMC) educates senior enlisted leaders from our Army, sister services, and allied militaries to be agile and adaptive senior noncommissioned officers through the study of leadership, the conduct of Unified Land Operations, and the application of Joint, Interagency, and Multi-National organizations in an era of persistent conflict. The SMC is the consummate institution that prepares them to execute at all command levels throughout the Department of Defense. This Professional Military Education (PME) is provided by leveraging both resident and distributive learning (dL) educational methods and technologies.

Murrell said. “This was two-fold. They were able to give the capabilities brief and be able to go right into an informal brief with their Soldiers.”

Murrell said she received rave reviews from both the CMF sergeants major and the students.

“The sergeants major said they were honored to take part in this and it was an opportunity to welcome the students into the sergeant major rank,” she said. “The students were ecstatic. Some of them had never met their regimental or COE sergeant major and it gave them an opportunity for one on one dialogue.”

She added Branch Week provided the students a total overview of each CMF and a deep dive into what was going on within their CMF.

“Branch Week has been an amazing experience I believe for Class 68,” Master Sgt. Natasha Santiago (CMF 68-Medical), Class 68 class president said. “So many of the regimental sergeants major came through this week and actually briefed the statistics and capabilities for their respective branches and I know personally I learned so much about my classmates and what they do and what they bring to the fight.”

Fellow classmate, Master Sgt. James Brown (CMF 68-Medical), said Branch Week really opened up his eyes.

“Since going through the joint (Department of Joint Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational), and force management (Department of Force Management) portions of the Sergeants Major Course, everything at the strategic level the regimental

## CLASS 68 SCHOOLED ON NCO 2020 STRATEGY



The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy welcomed Sgt. Maj. Brian Lindsey of the Institute for Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development, during its Branch Week activities December 5, in order to brief on the NCO 2020 Strategy. Lindsey told the students that they were the stakeholders of the change and should not only know the NCO 2020 Strategy, but should be getting the word out to the force. (Photo by David Crozier NCOL CoE & USASMA)

**By David Crozier, Command Communications**

There are a lot of changes that are coming which will affect noncommissioned officer education, Sgt. Maj. Brian Lindsey of the Institute for Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development said during a briefing December 5 to the Sergeants Major Course Class 68 students at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. It comes in the form of the NCO 2020 Strategy – a document all NCOs should be familiar with.

“You all in this class are going to be the stakeholders [of this change] and you are the ones who are going to get the word out to the force,” Lindsey said. “Some change is good and we need to do some changing. ... We haven’t revamped NCO education since 1973.”

Lindsey asked the class to not look at the changes through their perspective, but to see the changes through the lens of a Soldier who is just entering the Army. He provided an overview of INCOPD and its responsibilities in the development of the NCO 2020 Strategy and then asked the students how many have read the document.

“If you are just learning about it here, you and your Soldiers are behind the power curve,” he said. “We have to get this information out to the force and you have to enforce and reinforce it because it is coming no matter how bad you want to hold it up. It’s coming and you need to make sure you are all in.”

The NCO 2020 Strategy, he said, is only 13 pages long and is easy to read. The document outlines three lines of effort for the Army – Development, Talent Management and Stewardship of the Profession. Under Development the main objectives are S.T.E.P. (Select, Train, Educate, Promote), NCO PME (Professional Military Education), Credentialing and Validation. Under Talent Management the main objectives are Broadening, Operational and PDM (Career Map). The main objectives under Stewardship of the Profession are Doctrine, Self-Development, 2020 Year of the NCO and Character Development.

“You need to get on board and read the 13 pages and make sure you are familiar with what you are



going to be enforcing real soon,” Lindsey said turning his attention to Leader Core Competencies. LCCs are being placed into all phases of PME particularly in the Advance and Senior Leader courses because the courses are technically heavy. “We are not teaching a Soldier how to be a leader in these courses. We are not teaching them anything about being a leader.”

The Leader Core Competencies focus on six areas - Communications, Leadership, Program Management, Operations, Training Management and Readiness. Along with the LCCs, the Army is introducing Distributive Learning Courses which are replacing the Structured Self Development. The DLC courses will be a part of the progressive and sequential learning model and will include the NCO Writing Program.

“Inside of your DLC there will be a requirement for a reflection paper ... then you will have a paper to write when you get to your BLC which will become a part of your GPA,” Lindsey said. “This will become part of the norm as you progress [through NCOPDS] by the time you get to the Sergeants Major Course. We are going to start [Soldiers writing] early and it is going to be progressive and sequential. As you go up, the papers get longer and harder.”

Lindsey explained that being able to develop written communications skills will help support the Soldier and team performance in support of mission readiness.

As part of the NCO 2020 Strategy, The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & USASMA is currently revamping the DLC courses with the updated DLC I expected to hit the streets by June of 2018 with DLC II in August. Levels III through VI will follow sequentially in 3-4 month increments. The Basic Leader Course is also undergoing redesign and is currently in validation with a goal of delivering the course Army-wide by June 2018. The Master Leader Course is expected to be a part of S.T.E.P. by October 2018 and a non-resident course expected to come online on or about May 2018.

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## CONGRATULATIONS SLDC CLASS 68-003 GRADUATES



The The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy held a graduation December 13 in the Academy's Cooper Lecture Center for the Spouse Leadership Development Course Class 68-003. The 19 graduates attended classes totaling 42 hours of instruction in areas such as: human psychology, human relations, leadership development, conflict management, protocol/etiquette, public speaking, communications, computer operations, effective listening, team-building, family readiness group training, benefits and entitlements and health awareness. Following remarks Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy J. Sellers, assisted by his wife Shaunette, and Mebane, handed out the certificates of completion to the spouses. (Photo by David Crozier, NCOL CoE & USASMA)

## AN UPDATE ON THE BATTLE STAFF NCO COURSE

By Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Simmons, Director of Staff and Faculty

The U.S. Army Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course trains staff sergeants through sergeants major, to be creative, adaptive thinkers able to operate on a Battalion or higher staff alongside their officer counterparts. The 22-day course is currently 175 instruction hours in length, and upon successful completion of the course, the NCO is awarded the ASI 2S. Throughout the history of the course, it has been adaptive and transformative to meet the needs of the force.

The most recent adaptation of the course was completed in February of 2017 and addressed the Experiential Learning Model and various course additions based on feedback from the force. Just eight short months later, and the course is under revision again! Recently the Staff and Faculty and BSNCO initiated a review of the entirety of the course to align itself better with the recently released FM 3.0, Operations.

The focus on large scale combat operations is a large shift in how the Army fights, and in turn, how staffs receive, process and disseminate information and orders. The shift from fighting squads and platoons to fighting Divisions will require commanders to take in, process and direct differently than previous commanders. Utilizing the Understand, Visualize, Describe, Direct, Lead and Assess of the commander's role in the operations process, commanders will require different information and will process it through their staffs in a different manner than before. There must be a well-trained, intelligent, adaptive NCO ready to assist the staff in the Operations Process.

How the staffs operate in a peer-to-peer, or near-peer kinetic fight will be completely different than what most current Soldiers are used to. The old norm of operating off FOB's, with secure infrastructure, constant availability of networks and satellites, will likely not be present on the next battlefield, or at least diminished. How does a staff function when the lights, Internet and satellites go out, and are we prepared for that fight? Just a few of the questions that the NCOL CoE & USASMA is looking into. Is the amount of analog training currently in the curriculum sufficient to meet the needs of the above scenario? The level and depth of training for analog tracking, map boards, sand tables, rehearsals, and MDMP, may not currently be sufficient to sustain a staff that has no power, no Internet, and no satellites or any combination of those stressors.

Another aspect that the NCOL CoE & USASMA is looking into is how well trained are our NCO's when it comes to working on a staff in garrison. Unit Training Management at the NCO level has been identified as a capability gap within some units around the Army. One possible solution is to split a portion of the curriculum to address some of the Army wide UTM functions. Some of these capabilities could include, Total Ammunition Management Information System, Range Facility Management Support System, Digital Training Management System, Schools NCO, Joint Capabilities Release, and the Command Post of the Future. Being able to arrive on the battle field, ready to fight, means that Soldiers trained hard at home station and CTC's prior to arriving in combat. To enable more efficient and effective trainers within the unit, staff NCO's need to master these systems to allow combatant commanders to field the finest trained fighting Soldiers on the planet.

Driving change for the NCO and Soldier education, means that from time to time, a top to bottom review of all courses needs to occur to remain relevant for the fight of the future. Peer-to-peer threats, hybrid warfare, large scale combat operations and multi domain battlefields, will all require a well-trained, agile, and adaptive NCO, capable of working alongside officer counterparts, understanding the officer led operations process, and maximizing their NCO experience to provide accurate, timely information, with as much clarity as possible, to a Commander so they can make the best decisions possible during the crucible of ground combat. This is our opportunity to keep the Battle Staff course relevant and answer the need from the force for a highly trained and intelligent Battle Staff NCO.

Do you have thoughts or ideas on ways to make Battle Staff better? Let us know! Email me at [christopher.j.simmons14.mil@mail.mil](mailto:christopher.j.simmons14.mil@mail.mil). ULTIMA strong!







TRADOC CSM BLOG:

# ITCOP HELPS SOLDIERS FIND NCO PME SEATS

By Cathy Fahsel, TRADOC G-3/5/7 Training Management Operations Activity.

**Note: The was posted in Featured, Force 2025 and Beyond, Frontpage, Improving the Army, NCO education, School/Course Updates, Straight from the CSM, Technology, Training**

During the NCO Development Town Hall held Nov. 3, someone asked why Soldiers didn't have a school date within a month of the selection list being released. In answering the question, Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport mentioned a U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command program called the Institutional Training Common Operational Picture, or ITCOP. He also addressed a perceived capacity issue and how Soldiers should log on to ITCOP to see the available Noncommissioned Officer Education System, or NCOES seats throughout the components.

My name is Cathy Fahsel, from TRADOC's G-3/5/7 Training Operations Management Activity, and I'd like to share some information about the capabilities ITCOP can provide.

If you've ever wanted to get a quick look at available seats for professional military education, well now you can. ITCOP provides commanders, leaders and Soldiers enhanced analytical and reporting capability. Its dashboards are designed to provide visibility of unused and open seats available to personnel under various commands. The reports are presented in dashboard views that may be sorted, filtered and exported based on the user's preferences and needs.

## What is ITCOP?

ITCOP is an Army Training Requirements and Resources System-managed tool that provides commanders and leaders an up-to-date status of training through multiple dashboards — the open seat dashboard, the fill rate dashboard and the school fill rate dashboard — to maximize training in a resource-constrained environment.

ITCOP provides the ability to view available NCOPDS and military occupational specialty-training, or MOS-T, seats from 0-120 days of a class start date by military occupational specialty, career management field and location.

ITCOP identifies available institutional training seats regardless of component within The Army School System, or TASS.

Centers and schools can use ITCOP to track fill rates by MOS, course and school by simply checking or unchecking the boxes.

## Why is ITCOP important to the Army?

ITCOP offers commanders and leaders a holistic view of training slots available for NCOPDS and MOS-T courses across the United States.

ITCOP enables commanders and leaders to efficiently monitor TASS capacity vacancies in near real-time and capitalize on opportunities to schedule Soldiers for training as needed.

Supports Select, Train, Educate, Promote, or STEP.

## If I find an available seat via ITCOP, am I guaranteed that seat?

ITCOP does not guarantee the availability of a seat in ATRRS. ITCOP provides visibility of potentially available seats to users who may not already have direct access to this information.

Command and ATRRS policy and procedures for obtaining an identified seat remain unchanged.

## Who can use ITCOP?

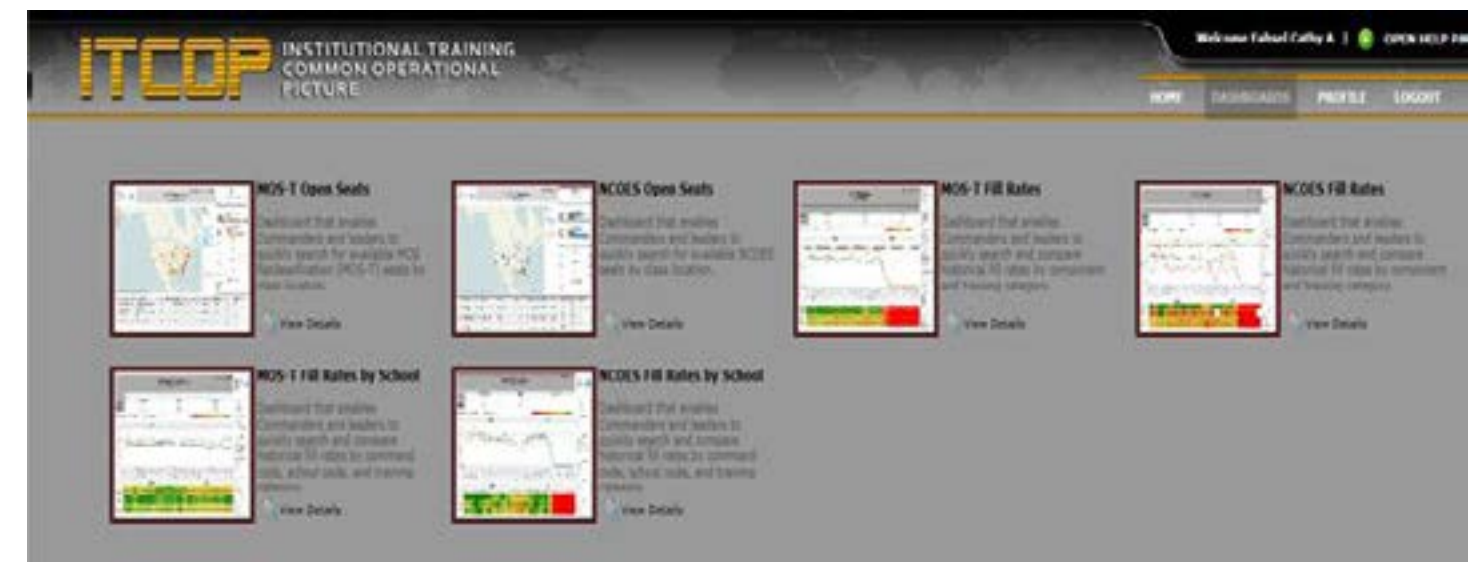
Soldiers in pay grades of E-5 through E-9 and O-3 and above are automatically granted access.

Individuals with pay grades of E-8, E-9, O-5 and O-6 can delegate access to other users (civilians and Soldiers in pay grades below E-5). To delegate access, users navigate to the User Management section within ITCOP and select the "Add a Delegate" link. They will supply a name, social security number and email address. Upon selecting "Add Delegate," an email notification will be sent to the new user with instructions to log in to ITCOP. The new user will then be required to log in to ITCOP with the common access card to confirm identity. At this point, the delegate will be allowed to access ITCOP.

For more information, visit <https://www.atrrs.army.mil/ITCOP>.

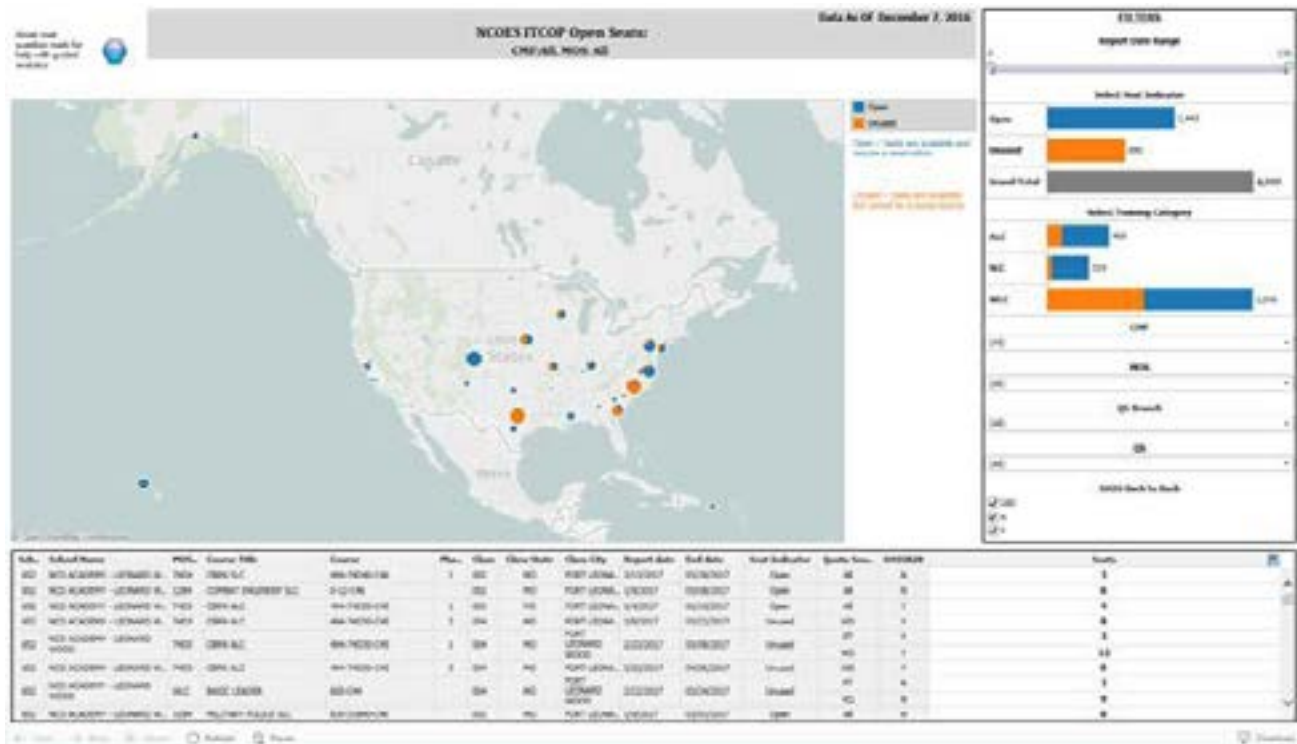


The main page looks like this and gives you a view of the available dashboards. Soldiers simply click on the "DASHBOARDS" tab to open up the menu.



There are six dashboards to choose from: MOS-T Open Seats, NCOES Open Seats, MOS-T Fill Rates, NCOES Fill Rates, MOT-T Fill Rates by School, and NCOES Fill Rates by School.





NCOPDS and MOS-T Open Seats dashboards enable commanders and leaders to quickly search for available MOS-T and NCOES seats by class location. Dashboards provide a map and data table view of open and unused seats by location and can be filtered by Report Data Range, Training Category, CMF, MOS, Quota Source and One Army School System, or OASS.



NCOPDS and MOS-T Fill Rates dashboards enable commanders and leaders to easily search and compare historical fill rates by component and training category. Dashboards provide interactive bar graph displays of fill rates that can be compared over time and across components and can be filtered by Fiscal Year, Training Category, CMF, MOS and Quota Source.



NCOPDS and MOS-T Fill Rates by School dashboards enable commanders and leaders to search and compare historical fill rates by command code, school code and training category. Dashboards provide interactive displays of fill rates that can be compared over time and across school codes and can be filtered by FY, Time Period, School, Command, School, Training Category, CMF and MOS.

# USASMA RECOGNIZES INSTRUCTOR EXCELLENCE



On January 4, the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy awarded 42 Basic and three Senior Instructor Badges to some of our best and brightest NCO leadership. Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Sellers, USASMA commandant, presided over the ceremony congratulating the new instructors and encouraging others to continue to push forward in professional development. (Photo by Spc.James C. Seals, NCOL CoE & USASMA)



# FALSE REPORTING OF PRE-DEPLOYMENT READINESS METRICS

By Master Sgt. James Finney, Sergeants Major Course Class 68

Leaders are guilty of falsely reporting information. Lying may seem like a strong word to describe what they have done and what they may do in the future but it all boils down to just that, lying. At some point, leaders have made the conscious decision to blur the lines and equivocate truths by misreporting either the final data or our compliance with a published timeline. This paper will attempt to define the root cause of a leader's conscious decision to report false information, identify the impacts to the unit, apply the three ethical lenses to look at this problem, provide a possible solution to attack this ethical issue facing the Army today, and present some opposing viewpoints to the solution. Resolving the ethical issue of falsely reporting pre-deployment readiness metrics with validation through external sources is a solution that commanders can employ.

## The Root Cause: Ethical Fading and the Fear of Labels

There can be many different points of view when identifying the root cause of falsely reporting pre-deployment readiness metrics. Leaders are fallible and may start to see what they want to see. Leaders create an ethical issue when they fail to integrate their personal and professional ethics. According to Tenbrunsel and Mesick (2004), ethical fading occurs when the ethical aspects of making decisions fade from view. This often happens when leaders face compressed timelines and competing training requirements coupled with a high operational tempo. For example, the Army's Aviation Resource Management Survey (ARMS) cites in their FY15 trends report (n.d.) that "more than 28% of active duty, national guard and reserve aviation units misreported their manning levels, equipment status, and unit training readiness levels" (*FY15 ARMS Trends*, p. 27). This report continues to hypothesize that this occurred because units did not want to receive criticism or the negative attention an ineffective leader gets from senior leadership.

More so, research by Wong and Gerras (2015) explore at length occurrences of leaders who lose their ethical optic and theorize as to why they did it. At one point the authors' state, "Units, however, rarely have the option to report that they have not completed the ARFORGEN pre-deployment checklist." This statement demonstrates that leaders believe there is an attitude of zero-defect. This attitude creates an atmosphere where the Soldiers feel they have no recourse but to get the job done at all cost. In an environment where this mentality exists, Soldiers will often take shortcuts to get the job done or choose which of these tasks are important enough to complete while deciding to ignore the ones that they feel are not important. Most times, these shortcuts come to light and leaders underwrite this selective noncompliance. Now we have a zero-defect attitude that drives the actions of Soldiers and leaders in an environment where the leader undercuts guidance and accepts lower standards. This approach is cancerous and destroys a unit's ability to be effective.

The method mentioned above can only go unnoticed for a short time. Undoubtedly, senior leaders uncover these actions and they will see their subordinates as being incompetent or disobedient. The label of "incompetent" or "disobedient" would have a negative impact on the leader's career. No leader wants to fail or sets out with the goal of failing.

The two situations cited above are clear demonstrations of instances where a leader has lost their sincere ethical point of view through ethical fading and the fear of labels. In both cases, these leaders saw what they wanted to see. The right choice can sometimes be difficult to discern, but it must not be so hard that the leader compromises their ethics. While these statements may sound melodramatic, the impacts of falsely reporting pre-deployment readiness metrics are significant.



Master Sgt. James Finney

## Impacts of the Root Cause to the Unit

According to Headquarters, Department of the Army (2010), units notified of an upcoming deployment will begin their direct reporting of combat readiness no later than twelve months. Units that receive deployment orders earlier than twelve months will begin their reporting of combat readiness immediately. After sending the initial report, the unit will submit their updated status no less than every thirty days.

In the perfect instance of when a leader has twelve months notification prior to deployment, they have close to three hundred and sixty-five days to train, resource, and operate their units to the required 100% level. When leaders falsely report their pre-deployment readiness metrics, they are effectively telling their leadership that they are ready, when in fact, they are not. This puts the entire organization, not just the reporting unit, in jeopardy. The effects grow larger and spiral downwards. The unit will hover below the required 100% levels in manning and resources as well as missing combat specific training to accomplish their pre-deployment preparation.

The impact to the unit's morale will be significant. The remaining Soldiers will have to work much harder to prepare to deploy, spending longer hours doing more work. Once the unit deploys, its Soldiers will face an enemy with the wrong resources and insufficient training. This will result in a greater number of injuries, or worse, deaths. Instead of being ethical and reporting accurate information before their unit deployed, the leader may face the worst scenario. This does not need to happen if leaders remember their most important resource, their Soldiers. The Army has recognized that making ethically sound decisions is challenging. As such, the Army has developed three separate perspectives called ethical lenses.

## Applying the Three Ethical Lenses

To be an ethical leader, it requires more than just knowing what the Army's Values mean. Leaders have a variety of tools at their disposal to aid them in making sound, ethical decisions. There are models, methods, and guides for everything, that can be at times, overwhelming to choose the right tool for the situation. Because of this, the Army has designed three straightforward processes or lenses to help in making ethically sound decisions. They are the virtues based lens, the rules based lens, and the consequence based lens. According to Headquarters, Department of the Army (2012):

Army leaders are expected to do the right things for the right reasons. It is why followers count on their leaders to be more than just technically and tactically proficient. They rely on them to make ethical decisions. Determining what is right and ethical can be difficult. (p. 3-7)

According to the "Ethical Triangle" (Kem, 2010), these lenses evaluate the ethical issue and apply a prospective solution that aligns itself with the morals and values of the Army.

The first lens is the virtues based lens, which prompts leaders to ask, "What would a virtuous person do?" Through this perspective, a leader uses their own character, honor, and morals while weighing them against the Army's virtues defined in the Soldier's Creed, the Warrior Ethos, the NCO Creed, and the Army's Values. An often over looked aspect is when leaders forget to weigh the virtues of the organization that they serve in. This approach requires balance where one specific virtue or set of virtues does not outweigh the others. When faced with the issue of falsely reporting pre-deployment metrics, leaders should balance their integrity with the requirement of mission accomplishment.

The second lens is the rules based lens. This lens addresses the established laws that leaders follow in the Army. These rules can stem from the uniform code of military justice (UCMJ) or international rules such as the law of land warfare or the Geneva Convention. Regardless of where they stem, they are lawful and do not allow for interpretation. Leaders must take into consideration that while there are lawful binding rules, there are also rules that may not exist yet. Using this lens, leaders will generate courses of action to solve problems, adjudicate punishment under UCMJ, and coordinate operations with our joint and coalition partners. Leaders have the responsibility to safeguard the lives of their Soldiers. To lose just one because the leader did not accurately report their unit's pre-deployment metrics would break multiple rules.

Lastly, the consequence based lens considers an issue with the end result in mind. According to Kem,



(Kem, 2010), leaders should ask themselves key questions such as, “What gives the biggest bang for the buck?” and “Who wins and loses?” When using this lens, leaders may find themselves forming different courses of action or decisions based on the outcome. When using this lens, leaders will wargame different scenarios. After weighing and judging the situations, the leader will choose the course that will end in the result that best suits the leader. When leaders look at the end state, they must see the grievous potential if they fail to correctly report their pre-deployment metric.

### Validation through an External Agency

External agency validation provides a non-biased, third party review of a unit. This would be particularly effective for units with a pending deployment. By empowering the external agency with an open reporting channel to the appropriate higher headquarters, both the senior supporting and the senior supported leader will have a holistic picture of the unit. The evaluation of the unit's pre-deployment metrics should occur early enough in the pre-deployment process to allow for corrections.

### Opposing Viewpoints to External Agency Validation

When leaders do not consider the ethical lenses, they will make improper decisions that fail to take the Army's morals and principals into consideration. A leader who takes an opposing point of view to the virtues lens would ignore their personal character and the experiences of others who have failed to honor the Army's values. A leader may feel pressured while working under a compressed timeline but that is not a valid reason for ignoring the virtues lens. A leader may disregard the rules based lens by flaunting examples of previous infractions that went unpunished. For example, take an instance of when a leader failed to report their accurate pre-deployment readiness metric three previous times. This individual may feel like the rule is not really a legitimate rule and therefore does not apply to them. Finally, an opposing viewpoint for the consequence based lens. Leaders may disregard this lens because they just want to get the job done as quickly as possible to make themselves look better than their peers.

### Conclusion

Resolving the ethical issue of falsely reporting pre-deployment readiness metrics with validation through external sources is a solution that commanders can employ. Throughout this paper, we have explored some of the root causes that can steer leaders to falsely report pre-deployment readiness metrics, discussed some of the impacts to units where false reporting takes place, took a detailed examination of the ethical issue through the three ethical lenses, provided a possible solution to the problem, and explored some opposing viewpoints to the solution. We must remember that leaders cannot solve this problem overnight. However, through accurate and honest reporting, leaders ensure that their units can deploy, fight, and win our Nation's wars while effectively preserving the peace.

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# A REFLECTION ON MISSION COMMAND

**Master Sgt. Sean T. McCracken, Sergeants Major Course Class 68**

In the early morning hours of 04 June 2010, I was flying high in a C-17 Air Force aircraft somewhere above Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I was about to conduct a combat equipped parachute jump onto one of Fort Bragg's drop zones. I was the platoon sergeant and the senior leader of the squadron's reserve force for this mission. The reserve force consisted of twelve paratroopers and three combat ready humvees that are ready to be heavy dropped by parachute. The paratroopers and humvees were cross-leveled onto multiple aircraft. After a short flight, the rear ramp of the aircraft I was riding in lowered and the parachute rigged humvee shot out the back of the aircraft like a rocket and into the black sky. The ramp closed and after a twenty-minute turn, I heard the command “ten minutes” followed by the rest of the jumpmaster's commands. I was going to be the last person on my side of the aircraft to exit, which would enable me to land where I needed to be at the trail end of the drop zone. Once everyone had hooked up their static line and all the equipment checks were complete, the green light came on and paratroopers began to exit. As I approached the door, the red light illuminated and the jumpmaster stopped the remainder of the paratroopers from exiting. I knew that it would now be a least twenty minutes before I would exit on the next pass and I would land approximately three kilometers away from where I needed to land, I began to worry. The next man in charge was a young sergeant. Was I clear enough about the mission, key tasks, implied tasks, and the squadron and brigade commander's intent? Had we rehearsed enough?

This reflection paper will define mission command. It will also explain how I see myself using mission command in the future as an operations sergeant major or command sergeant major of a cavalry squadron.

### Mission Command

In 2012, the U.S. Army formally issued new doctrine on mission command, the philosophy and practice of command that serves as a foundation for unified land operations. According to the Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, *Operational Terms and Military Symbols*, “Mission command is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations.” (Department of the Army, 2016, p. 1-63)

The young sergeant in the story above, was able locate all three humvees, set priorities of work, and get the humvees combat ready. He then cross-leveled all personnel and equipment, maneuvered the vehicles into their positions, and sent all reports to the squadron headquarters. He did all of this without me, his platoon sergeant. He understood the mission, commander's intent, key tasks, and implied tasks. He could have just as easily stayed with the vehicles and waited for my arrival but instead took the disciplined initiative and continued the mission.

### Future Warfare

In 2017, the Chief of Staff of the Army said, “We are going to have to empower and decentralize leadership to make decisions and achieve battlefield effects in a widely dispersed environment where subordinate leaders, junior leaders... may not be able to communicate with their higher headquarters, even if they wanted to.” (Lopez, 2017)



**Master Sgt. Sean T. McCracken**



As a future operations or command sergeant major, I plan to apply mission command at every level of my organization. This does not just apply to combat deployments or large training events. It can apply to everything we do. For example, if we are planning a platoon live fire event at the squadron level, there is a lot of training that must come before that event. Individual weapons qualifications, team and squad live fires, and many other tasks. We will give the troop command teams the commander's intent, key tasks, implied tasks, but not how to execute the training prior to platoon live fire.

I will achieve the application of mission command in my unit by using the art of command along with the science of control by utilizing the mission command principles.

## Mission Command Principles

There are six mission command principles. They are, build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create a shared understanding, provide a clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk.

## Build Cohesive Teams through Mutual Trust

I plan to build cohesive teams through several different ways. First, I will always lead by example. Whether it is daily physical readiness training sessions with the Soldiers, uniform standards and appearance, or off duty conduct. Sergeants major should always be the example to follow. I will establish monthly physical fitness and training competitions, squad versus squad and platoon leader and platoon sergeant versus platoon leader and platoon sergeant. The troop command teams will also have a competition that will focus on the training and readiness of their troop. It will include deployable Soldier and maintenance operational readiness percentages, weapons qualification and Army Physical Fitness Test averages, and other training and readiness areas.

Building pride in your organization is another way to build teams. Depending on the unit, this could take a lot time to accomplish. I plan to achieve this by publicly recognizing outstanding performance and teaching the Soldiers our unit's history. However, we must adopt a proud but not satisfied attitude. This will help ensure that we will always strive to achieve better results regardless of past performance. Conducting airborne, air assault or dismounted long duration training missions will help build teams. These missions require a high level of physical fitness and determination. This will create shared hardships among squads and platoons. It will also create Soldiers that are more resilient. Last but certainly not least, is ensuring all leaders are taking care of their Soldiers and their families. This alone will build trust in an organization.

## Create a Shared Understanding

I plan to create a shared understanding in my organization by communicating. Communication or lack thereof, is normally the root of all problems or issues. We will communicate standards and expectations through the commander's command philosophy. We will forecast and plan all future training events and operations as far out as possible to provide predictability for the Soldiers. Soldiers must understand this philosophy at all levels in the organization, not just the staff officers or senior leadership.

## Provide Clear Commander's Intent

We will provide the commander's intent and guidance on everything we do, not just major operations. It will include his intent on physical readiness training, weapons training, live fire exercises, and leader development training. This will enable subordinate command teams develop their own commander's intent and training plans, nested with the squadron commander's intent, and will further their individual development. This intent will go down to the lowest level in the organization.

## Exercise Disciplined Initiative

We will encourage all Soldiers to take disciplined initiative, both in garrison and in combat operations. Soldiers must learn to take initiative in all aspects of their lives if they want to be successful. We will use the mission command principles; we are not going to tell them exactly how to do something. That is for the leaders and Soldiers to figure out. Additionally, all NCOs will train to perform the duties of the next higher-level position. Team leaders will learn squad leader duties; squad leaders will learn platoon sergeant duties and so on. Finally, we will recognize and reward initiative by recommending them for awards, promotions, or just recognizing them in front of the squadron.

## Use Mission Orders

I plan to use mission orders for all operations and taskings. The intent is to avoid only using PowerPoint made CONOPs. A CONOP is merely the concept of the operation, which is part of an operations order. These have become the norm because they can be easier and faster to create. It is the small portion of the order and does not cover everything that would be in a five-paragraph operations order. However, a CONOP can be with an operations order. In addition, if we use actual orders for everything that we can, it is training for the staff, the command teams, and leaders at the platoon level. This combined with future planning will minimize last minute taskings and give Soldiers the predictability that they deserve.

## Accept Prudent Risk

Leaders in the U.S. Army must accept certain risks. Just being a Soldier has certain risks all by itself. However, leaders cannot be risk adverse but must use their experience, combined with their judgement, to determine if the risk is worth the reward. They must complete a deliberate risk assessment. This could be nonstandard live fire ranges or airborne operations not just combat operations. I, as the senior enlisted leader, will advise the commander on all associated risks and potential outcomes associated with all courses of action.

Additionally, I plan on leading training events with a focus on mission command with all of the platoon sergeants and first sergeants in my unit. This will help teach, coach, and mentor the future leaders of the U.S. Army.

## Conclusion

Throughout all military history, leaders have been conducting mission command, but was not in our doctrine until recently. We must apply mission command in everything we do to include training exercises, routine garrison operations, and combat operations. This will greatly increase our chances of success in everything we do. In addition, we must train our subordinates in mission command. If they do not understand how mission command works, will ultimately fail.

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# THE SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTE

**Master Sgt. Domingo J. Chavez , Sergeants Major Course Class 68**

The end of World War II was a turning point in South East Asia, Japan had fallen to the Allied forces and under the San Francisco treaty relinquished title and claim to the South China Sea. With no other nation to challenge China, it quietly became the most powerful nation in the region. China's claim to The South China Sea has been largely uncontested until 1960 when the discovery of the large amounts of natural resources launched its neighboring countries to make claim. According to Jenner and Thuy (2016) "the South China Sea is a primary trade route for more than half of the world's annual merchant fleet tonnage, the location of potentially huge oil and gas reserves and the main source of protein in maritime South East Asia" (p. 1). The disagreements in the South China Sea have stretched the tension and instability in the region.

Although still peaceful, the South China Sea is the focus of change in the international balance of power, which could be an impending trigger for military conflict. With the expansion of China's Navy and defense spending, it has become clear that, although China wishes to dispute the claim for the South China Sea peacefully, its military actions have provoked tension in the region.

China's, self-proclaimed owner of the highly disputed South China Sea, chose to ignore the world arbitration ruling that it did not have legal grounds for the South China Sea. China rejected the ruling; China's foreign minister Hong Lei argued against the lack of legitimacy and made clear Beijing would reject any ruling by the court. While it is an East Asia issue, the United States needs to maintain its presence to protect the interest of our allies and continue to exercise freedom of navigation, some might assert China's modernization of its military and island building in the South China Sea might lead to conflict.

## **The US Should Maintain its Presence to Protect the Interest of our Allies and Continue to Exercise Freedom of Navigation**

Southeast Asia has hit a growth spurt like no other area in the world. Home to the People's Republic of China, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Nation of Brunei, and Taiwan (officially the Republic of China). It has some of the world's quickest growing economies as well as one of the largest populations. Altogether, there are six countries laying claim to the South China Sea and its many islands, all said there are only five different claims. China's 9-dashed lines claim, through which China is aggressively asserting indisputable sovereignty to all islands and waters enclosed by the lines; it is the main driver of the South China Sea dispute. China's 9-dashed lines claim encloses 85% of the entire South China Sea; this is equivalent to about 1 million square miles. Although the United States and China are not currently involved in maritime disputes, disagreements do exist on the laws and ruling of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Disagreements over freedom of navigation in the South China Sea have led to a number of incidents between the two powerful nations. In 2011 United States President, Barack Obama acknowledged that the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the South China Sea, an area of utmost significance for the United States foreign policy. Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional meeting in Hanoi in July 2010 that, "[T]he U.S. has national interest in freedom of navigation, open access to Asia's maritime commons, and respect for international law in the South China Sea" (Landler, 2010). Because of her statement, China advised the United States to stay out of this problem and



**Master Sgt. Domingo J. Chavez**

not interfere in regional disputes. The United States maintains that the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea authorizes nations to exercise high seas freedoms that include peaceful military operations. China differs; it says that these are not peaceful military activities. The United States must acknowledge the fact that China is a great power and security challenge for the decades ahead. The stability and wealth of the Asia region are of utmost importance to the economic and global power of the United States. A quote from former secretary of defense Robert Gates:

When considering the military modernization programs of countries like China, we should be concerned less with their potential ability to challenge the US symmetrically- fighter to fighter, ship-to-ship- and more with their ability to disrupt our freedom of movement and narrow our strategic options. Their investments in...anti-ship weaponry and ballistic missiles could threaten America's primary way to project power and help allies in the Pacific – in particular our forward air bases and carrier strike groups. (Jenner and Thuy, 2016, p. 19).

## **China's Modernization of its Military and Island Building**

China's economic growth has provided the foundation for an increase in defense spending and modernizing all military services. The most important modernization is to its South China Sea fleet that includes amphibious ships, submarines, land combatants, surveillance and targeting systems, the expansion of aircraft carrier strike groups, and nuclear attack submarines. The United States, Japan, and Australia have voiced concerns believing that China's military buildup is more than defensive. Jenner and Thuy (2016) noted that "In the words of former admiral Michael Mullen, the strategic intent behind China's development of new capabilities seem very focused on the United States Navy and our bases that are in that part of the world" (p. 224). In 2009 under the Obama administration, the United States asserted itself back into Asia and in direct reaction to China's modernization; the United States deployed 31 of its fast attack submarines to the Pacific and stepped up its anti-submarine program. The United States intervention into the South China Sea dispute has provoked a hostile reaction from China. China sees the United States as an outsider in the dispute and predicts it will only complicate the issue even further. In 1947, the Chinese developed an arbitrary line in the South China Sea known as the nine-dash line. The nine-dash line contains the area in the South China Sea that China claims as their own by ancestral rights. The nine-dash line encompasses 80 percent of the South China Sea including tiny inlets. China has been vocal in their claims that the South China Sea belongs to them by historical rights. Dutton (2014) states that "The Chinese have long felt vulnerable from the sea, and their current maritime strategy seeks to reduce that vulnerability by extending a ring of maritime control around China's periphery" (p. 7). The United States and its allies in South East Asia see China's actions as strategic as it would provide the Chinese freedom of maneuver throughout the South China Sea and quick access to the Pacific. China's neighboring countries believe that China's policy has become more aggressive. China's Navy has seized fishing boats, exchanging gunfire, and arresting sailors from other countries. Along with the modernization of its military, China has also been busy building artificial islands in the South China Sea. The swiftness and scale of the island building by China have worried its neighboring countries as well as countries with economic ties to the South China Sea. China has built port facilities, airstrips, and many military buildings. China's new islands allow them to use that portion of the sea for its own use. In 1998, China snatched the Subi reef from the Philippines and erected military facilities and a radar. In 1995, China seized Mischief Reef from the Philippines and by 2016, construction on an 8,500ft runway and a large harbor was almost at completion. China's most strategically significant new island is the Fiery Cross Reef it has an airstrip that is long enough to land all aircraft, from large transports to fighter jets. It has 12 hardened shelters with retractable roofs and enough hangars to house combat aircraft. United States officials show concern that the island building points to the Chinese establishing full control over the resource-intensive waters and islands also claimed by the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei, and Malaysia. India is the latest to express concern about China's building and military modernization.

## **Factors That Increase the Probability of Conflict in the South China Sea**

China has stated that it will defend its territorial limit within the South China Sea. Without intervention



by disputing neighbors, this would allow China to control and disrupt the main trade route and trade shipments to all countries in Southeast Asia. It would also deny access to foreign military forces, mainly the United States. The scenarios are strong; if United States aircraft or ships enter water that China claims, then Chinese pilots, soldiers, and sailors need to think about how they will respond. A military response could swiftly lead to an escalation of force for both countries, especially if the United States suffer significant damage. The United States and China have already come close to conflict over several aircraft collisions and closed in patrols in disputed waters. If the Chinese government shows weakness, it could undergo loss of face for the communist party. If the United States hesitates, it will risk the impression amid allies and United States partners that it lacks determination in light of its policy in the Middle East, Iraq, and the Ukraine. The United States continues to pursue its allies in the region to take a role, it hopes the collective weight of the United States, Australian, and Japanese forces will force China to rethink. The United States perceives China's claim in the South China Sea as an indication of aggression, while, many in China see the United States action as provoking and a risk to China's sovereignty. Countries have started to believe that China's policy is becoming more and more aggressive. China's Navy has been more expressively aggressive at sea, exchanging gunfire, seizing fishing boats, and arresting sailors from other countries. In late 2013, China warned that it would take defensive measures against foreign aircraft that did not give notice before entering an air-defense zone that China had declared off its coast. The United States responded by sending two, unarmed, B-52s over the East China Sea to contest the Chinese claim. In 2001, a Chinese fighter jet collided with a United States Navy Ep-3 surveillance plane. Department of Defense officials were furious when a Chinese fighter jet did a barrel roll over a United States Navy P-8 Poseidon surveillance aircraft over the South China Sea; the White House called the occurrence a deliberate provocation. The United States needs to issue a strong notice that if China continues to build islands and station military assets, such as combat aircraft or long-range missiles then it will change United States policy. The United States should shed its position of impartiality and increase its efforts to aid its allies to defend themselves against China's bullying.

Conclusion

The two major disputing countries in the South China Sea are Vietnam and China concerning the Parcel and Spratly Islands. In the progression of the current years, the disagreement has reached beyond these two nations and now involves the United States. In order to alter China's policy and sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, the United States needs to maintain its presence by continuing to exercise freedom of navigation. The United States needs to pressure the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea to uphold and enforce tribunal rulings against China. With the economic and military growth of China, the United States and its allies need to continue to conduct international military exercises in the region to coerce China to settle disputes diplomatically. Although, there are many factors that increase the probability of conflict in the South China Sea the United States and its allies need to be prepared, militarily, for any and all issues that may arise. The best method to keep the sea conflict-free is for the United States to do what has worked so well for over a century, prevent any other power from controlling it.

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THE NORTH VIETNAM STRATEGY BEFORE AND DURING THE TET OFFENSIVE

Master Sgt. Michal Zelenak, Sergeants Major Course Class 68

Editor's Note: Master Sgt. Michal Zelenak is a member of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic and one of 56 international students from 45 countries who are a part of Sergeants Major Course Class 68.

The North Vietnamese military perspective on the Vietnam War dramatically changed in 1967. As a result of escalating U.S. bombing against targets of strategic significance, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and its population were suffering from enormous damage and casualties. This fact brought the bitterness and frustration not only to the North Vietnamese population but also to NVA leader General Vo Nguyen Giap. North Vietnam was becoming more dependent on Russia and China for military and economic aid (Lung, 1981). Moreover, the war in the south was not going well, and the United States and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) were slowly pushing back North Vietnam's guerrillas. These factors contributed to Giap's conclusion that "the war had reached a stalemate" (Woods, 2008, para. 57). Aware of the growing anti-war movement in the United States, he saw an opportunity to terminate the U.S.' will to continue the war. He also believed that the upcoming U.S. presidential election in November 1968 would only strengthen U.S. domestic opposition to the war-another strategic opportunity. According to Woods (2008), "This was the origin of the Tet offensive- a campaign of breathtaking breadth, speed, and scope" (para. 58). While U.S. representatives initially believed the Tet Offensive would bring an end to the war, strategically it was a success for the North Vietnamese and, ultimately, the turning point for U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam.



Master Sgt. Michal Zelenak

North Vietnam Objectives (Ends)

The North Vietnamese objective in the Vietnam War was to unite not only soldiers but the entire patriotic nation in order to protect the north, liberate the south, and fight until the complete victory- the unification of the fatherland (Giap, 1968). Finlayson (1988) offered a description of North Vietnam's ends as follows: The objective of the North Vietnamese, since 1952 at least, was to install Communist regimes in the whole of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia with Vietnam unified under the leadership of the Lao Dong Party. This objective was maintained throughout the war, only the strategy for its realization changed. (para. 7) In fact, North Vietnam's military and political objectives forged into one common goal. Toward this end, they both sought for unified action to accomplish their objective by a great victory, creating one unified Vietnam. Thus, North Vietnam's idealism, its persuasive leadership ideas, and its collective national values drove their strategy to achieve their objective.

Tet Offensive-from Guerrilla to Largely Conventional Operations (Ways)

By early 1967, North Vietnam's military leaders aligned behind Vo Nguen Giap who continued with guerrilla activities, which seemed to be successful in South Vietnam. Guerrilla warfare tactics and activities, such as the shelling of the Independence Palace in Saigon during a formal reception with the presence of the U.S. Vice President Humphrey, were effective. In this regard, they produced a "favorable psychological impact and greatly enhanced Communist prestige throughout the world" (Lung, 1981, p. 16).



On the other hand, U.S. forces with their enormous numerical strength, powerful air force, and sizable artillery and armor continued bombing North Vietnam's strategic objects. During this time, General William Westmoreland, the U.S. commander in Vietnam, proclaimed and ensured that the United States had the victory in sight. Although Westmoreland used this informational instrument to satisfy the U.S. nation's mind, in fact, "the U.S. strategic policy, which called for the containment rather than the destruction of communist power" (Summers, 1982, p. 87) based itself on fears of sparking a nuclear war and Chinese intervention.

On the contrary, North Vietnam's leadership had already decided differently. Because of Giap's concerns about the United States expanding the war beyond South Vietnam's territory, North Vietnam leaders switched their strategy through the promulgation of Resolution No. 13 in April 1967 (Lung, 1981). This decision brought strategic change from guerrilla to largely conventional operations. In effect, it launched employment of military instruments of North Vietnam's power- the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam.

The NVA began a major buildup within the demilitarized zone (DMZ), including the introduction of heavy artillery. Toward this end, they launched a full-scale effort to overrun all of Quang Tri Province. Among all U.S. bases located in the northwestern corner of this province, Khe Sanh was the most important because of its geographical position. This base effectively controlled the area of the NVA infiltration roads (Lung, 1981).

On December 31, 1967, North Vietnam's minister for foreign affairs announced that they would be prepared to talk if the U.S. forces unconditionally ceased its bombing. The reason for declaration and using this informational instrument was to achieve the dual purpose. First, this announcement allowed to conceal North Vietnam's preparation for the general offensive and to enhance the U.S. and South Vietnamese belief that peace talks were in sight. Second, the cessation of bombing would provide North Vietnam with infiltration into the south (Lung, 1981). Additionally, convincing South Vietnamese that the United States agreed to the coalition government or, likewise, the false announcement of an extended truce during Christmas, New Year, and Tet holidays were another form of Communist propaganda to influence public opinion.

The NVA used the holidays to infiltrate weapons and ammunition into South Vietnam cities without notice. During this seasonal time, characterized by heavy traffic and less control, the NVA were able to hide their armament in double floored trucks with rice and vegetables or in flower carts. It was not only equipment but also personnel when the equivalent of five NVA battalions infiltrated into Saigon without notice.

Moreover, the North Vietnamese knew how to use their informational instrument of power marvelously. Lung (1981) offered one example when Hanoi Radio broadcasted the poem by Ho Chi Minh, who said this was Ho's greetings on the eve of Tet.

The poem reads: "This spring (Tet) is entirely different from previous ones because every household is enjoying news of victory. North and South are now forever reunited Forward! Total victory will be ours" (p. 29). This poem was not only a stimulation for communist troops in the south urging South Vietnamese to join the "General Offensive-General Uprising," but also code words for the attack (Lung, 1981).

The Tet Offensive started on the morning of January 31, 1968, when, according to tradition, every household in South Vietnam celebrated the first day of the Vietnamese New Year. Toward this end, the North Vietnamese achieved the element of surprise primarily targeting the highest local ARVN headquarters, Saigon's Presidential Palace, and the radio station. Besides Saigon, other cities and provincial capitals came under simultaneous attack on the same day. They followed the same pattern of attack "to capture and hold designated targets until reinforcements could move in from outside the city" (Lung, 1981, p. 47). In Saigon, 19 North Vietnamese attacked the U.S. embassy and killed two military police guards. Although the embassy was not in serious danger and the U.S. Marine guards killed all 19 invaders, this attack on American soil resonated in the media and became symbolic of the Tet Offensive throughout the world.

The success of the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam after the first days was unsteady. While the U.S. forces with the ARVN suppressed many attacks in first hours, some places, such as Khe Sanh or Hue, involved bitter fighting. The U.S. massive bombardment of the NVA's positions gradually baffled Giap's am-

bition to win a massive victory. By the middle of February 1968, it was evident "that the battle for South Vietnam's cities was failing" (Vietnam War, n.d., para. 29). The fighting died out in Saigon, however, North Vietnam continued with their long duration offensive strategy in the battles of Hue and Khe Sanh despite significant damages and casualties. Finally, the turning point of the offensive was the U.S. President Johnson's decision on 31 March 1968 to "cease all bombings north of the 20<sup>th</sup> parallel, which in effect would spare up to 80% of North Vietnamese territory" (Lung, 1981, p. 92). Simultaneously, he also announced not to run for re-election in November's elections and employed the diplomatic instrument for the first time in Vietnam War by starting negotiations for an appropriate location for peace talks, which finally took place in May 1968 in Paris.

## The North Vietnamese Army and Their Allies (Means)

Since the Vietnam War was for North Vietnamese the whole nation war, the NVA's manpower increased rapidly from 230,000 in 1965 to 480,000 in 1968, which represented about 3% of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 1981). The reason was either the buildup of Communist military force or the replacement of combat losses and damage repairs from U.S. air strikes. North Vietnam's annual force's increase requirement was about 120,000 persons in this time, mainly because of losses ranged from 35,000 to 45,000 men annually. However, North Vietnam's total manpower ranged from the age of 17 to 35 men eligible for military service, which was approximately 1.4 million (Central Intelligence Agency, 1981).

North Vietnam leaders conducted the Tet Offensive against the U.S. and the ARVN troops with the crucial support of their ally China. During Ho Chi Minh's medical treatment in China in 1967, Ho discussed with Mao Zedong not only the change in the strategy but also the Chinese arms and military equipment support (Zhang, 1996). Toward this end, China supplied the NVA with 280 122-mm howitzers, 960 57-mm antiaircraft guns, and 20,237 mortars. Furthermore, the ally provided nearly all the regular NVA soldier with the Chinese version of the Soviet-designed AK-47 rifle (Zhang, 1996, para. 14).

Finally, the military equipment and armament were not the only Chinese support and North Vietnam's tangible means. According to Zhang (1996), "Between 1965 and 1969 a total of 320,000 Chinese troops served in North Vietnam, and the greatest number at any one time there was 170,000" (para. 62).

## Risks

The main risk of North Vietnam during the Tet Offensive but persisting within the entire war was the fear of U.S. ground attacks against Hanoi. With the enormous U.S. manpower, equipment, airpower, and sources, the ground attack could potentially prove to be fatal for the NVA. On the other hand, the North Vietnam's leaders were aware of U.S. fear of Chinese involvement and possible intervention in case of a U.S. ground attack. By this, the North Vietnamese indirectly mitigated such a risk. In fact, the ground attack never took place, because Summers (1982) pointed out the U.S. Vietnam strategy: "we were fighting for time rather than space. And time ran out" (p. 89).

Another North Vietnamese risk during the Tet Offensive was the willingness of the South Vietnamese to support the guerrillas and the NVA operations, in effect, sharing the North Vietnamese will to rise up in revolt to reunite Vietnam. Although many of the South Vietnamese helped with the infiltration of guerrillas and the NVA into these cities, they generally remained inactive and did not support the North Vietnamese as they expected.

Moreover, the Chinese provided the North Vietnamese substantive support of armament, equipment, and other sources for NVA operations and played a major role in the Vietnam War. Without this excellent and intense relationship with their ally, the North Vietnamese risked the stoppage of this flow that would undoubtedly thwarted their objective.

In addition, during the Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese suffered an enormous amount of damage and casualties as a result of escalating U.S. bombing. Despite this, they risked and continued with other operations and battles. Probably, if President Johnson did not cease all bombings north of the 20<sup>th</sup> parallel, North Vietnam would have suffered fatal defeat.



Conclusion

North Vietnam’s strategy in the Vietnam War changed when its leaders, with General Vo Nguyen Giap in charge, realized that they had not been able to achieve their objective by guerrilla tactics only. Toward this end, they decided to launch the “General Offensive-General Uprising” Tet Offensive, which they believed would be the decisive point in the Vietnam War. They planned this offensive thoroughly and commenced with great surprise thanks to possessing one of the finest military minds of the twentieth century: General Vo Nguyen Giap. At the same time, the U.S. forces with General Westmoreland in charge assumed that the United States outclassed their enemy and the end of the war was in sight. However, the Tet offensive brought severe battles and an enormous amount of loss and casualties on both sides. Although most of the engagements played for the U.S. side and the U.S. forces continuously suppressed the enemy’s at-tacks, the more the conflict lasted, the more the U.S. publics willingness to continue this struggle was wan-ing. As such, the U.S. government was not able to present its objective in the war as clean and straightfor-ward any longer. As a whole, this caused severe difficulties in U.S. internal politics and forced Johnson’s administration to re-evaluate its strategy. Thus, although U.S. representatives initially believed the Tet Offensive would bring an end to the war, strategically it was a success for the North Vietnamese and the turning point for the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam.

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*The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & USASMA developed Professional Military Education courses are part of the career-long learning continuum and are an integral part of the Select, Train, Educate, Promote program of the Army Profession and affect more than 490,000 Soldiers annually.*

A LOOK AT NCOL CoE & USASMA

In our last issue we looked at the Staff and Faculty Directorate, the Directorate of Education, the Ser-geants Major Course and the Senior Leader Sustainment Cell. In this issue we introduce you to our Support Staff, the folks who keep the facility in top shape, take care of our Human Relation needs, run our NCO Heritage and Education Center and our Special Staff.

THE SUPPORT STAFF

Chief of Staff

- Human Resources Directorate
- Plans and Operations
- Logistics and Resource Management
- Strategic Plans
- Knowledge Management
- NCO Heritage and Education Center
- International Military Student Office
- Directorate of Educational Technology
- Learning Resources Center
- NCOL CoE & USASMA SHARP
- Quality Assurance Office
- Chaplain
- Visitor Coordination (Protocol)
- Legal Assistant

Special Staff

- Command Communications



**We Educate Today’s Leaders for Tomorrow!**



# SUPPORT STAFF

The **Chief of Staff** serves as an expert technical advisor and senior administrator to the Commandant, NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. The Commandant provides broad policy guidance but otherwise expects the Chief of Staff to function independently. The Chief makes authoritative recommendations, exercises professional judgment, initiative, and executive leadership while directing, coordinating, molding, and representing NCOL CoE & USASMA programs and initiatives.

The Chief of Staff assists the Commandant in conceptualizing, designing, developing and implementing significant new approaches to our mission. The results of this assistance are assessed in terms of accomplishment of objectives and effectiveness of results achieved. The Chief of Staff has responsibility for planning, directing, reviewing, coordinating, and supervising the activities of the organization. The NCOL CoE & USASMA trains more than 25,000 resident and non-resident noncommissioned officers annually, including Army active and reserve components, international students, and noncommissioned officers from sister services.

The Chief of Staff is directly responsible and accountable for all NCOL CoE & USASMA staff actions and in that capacity holds bi-weekly meetings with all subordinates in order to assess level of staff readiness and to share critical information with all staff entities to ensure proper information dissemination. The Chief of Staff also serves as the lead on DA Civilian professional development and talent management.



Mr. Jesse McKinney  
Chief of Staff

## Human Resources Directorate

The Human Resources Directorate (HRD) is a primary staff section which directly supports the Commandant, NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. Its primary activity is to provide administrative and personnel oversight and advice to the Commandant.

The HRD is an operating agency within NCOL CoE & USASMA. The HRD provides world class human resources and administrative support to the Army's premier enlisted Professional Military Education (PME) organization, NCOL CoE & USASMA.

The HRD oversees and executes the NCOL CoE & USASMA Talent Management Strategy by promoting the vision of dynamic personnel growth as the Academy transforms to a degree-producing institute of higher learning. The HRD postures the organization for success with sufficient manpower resources by anticipating future needs and programming increased manning to meet those demands.

## Plans and Operations

Plans and Operations is a primary staff section which directly supports and provides operational insight and advice to the Commandant. It is responsible for the planning and execution of Academy-level events and ceremonies; personnel and institutional security activities; coordination, synchronization, and sustainment of facilities resources; and oversight of specified command-level programs. It performs functions which affect activities across the command.

Some of the many activities performed by Plans and Operations include: Receives and analyzes orders from



CAC, TRADOC, and Fort Bliss, and subsequently develops and issues TASKORDs and OPORDs for the Commandant; Maintains the Master Activities Calendar (MAC); Plans and coordinates employment of internal facilities and general usage resources in support of academic and administrative activities; Tracks and schedules organizational training (incl. external schools); Operates and maintains the two auditoriums' presentation systems; Operates and maintains all Academy VTC and dL presentation systems; Maintains personal security clearance programs; Performs Foreign Disclosure processes; Performs all requirements of AT/FP/OPSEC/Physical Security; Receives and actions all facilities maintenance requirements; Oversees Safety, Fire Prevention, Occupational Health, and Emergency Management programs; Plans and executes oversight of Academy-level events (ex. observances, induction ceremonies, monthly recognition events) as well as other events which require significant external coordination (ex. SMC graduation); Develops and maintains continuity and contingency plans as well as compiles all Academy SOPs.

## Logistics & Resource Management

The Logistics & Resource Management Directorate (L&RM) is a primary staff section which directly supports the Commandant, NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. L&RM is the principal advisor in property book, logistical matters relating to supply maintenance, and contracts. The main focus is to provide a productive environment for the highest integrity of supply economy by using the Command Supply Discipline Program (CSDP) guidance. Prepares, executes, and reconciles NCOL CoE & USASMA's annual budget. Assists and provides reproduction service for lesson materials, brochures, flyers, programs, and Training Support Packages (TSPs) for all Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development System courses taught at NCOL CoE & USASMA. The section performs functions which affect activities across the command. The most common activities are: Property Book Officer; Government Purchase Card Billing Official for NCOL CoE & USASMA; Government Travel Card Agency Official Program Coordinator; and Submitting contract requirements for all Directorates.



## Strategic Plans

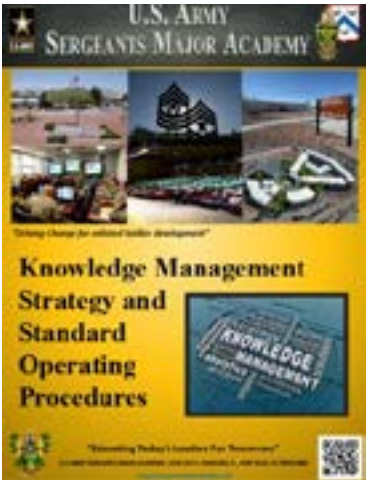
The Strategic Plans is a critical and vital element of the NCOL CoE & U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy as it provides leadership information, proposals, and strategies to adapt to the changes required to meet the future needs of the Army. It provides long range planning as it develops the Strategic Plan. It also provides operational control and management of Knowledge Management, and the NCO Heritage and Educational Center. The Director for Strategic Plans is also Program Manager for the NCOL CoE & USASMA Fellowship Program. Additionally, Strategic Plans performs duties as needed by the Office of the Commandant.

Strategic Plans is composed of the Director, a Strategic Planner, and Knowledge Manager. Some of the responsibilities and functions the Strategic Plans perform include the NCOL CoE & USASMA Strategic Plan; Strategic Planning Working Group; Knowledge Process and Performance Management; SharePoint Administration; NCOL CoE & USASMA Fellowship Program Management; Area Development Plan (Military Construction Projects); Conference Management; Briefings and Presentations; SIGACTS; CAC Updates; Weekly



SIGACTS; Strategic Management System (SMS) Administration; Organization and Functions Document (USASMA Reg 10-1); TRADOC Regulation 10-5 Series; Career Program (CP) 51 Management; and oversight of the NCO Heritage and Education Center.

Knowledge Management



Knowledge Management (KM): KM is central to enhancing collaboration and shared understanding. KM defines and illustrates “What we are for” and “what do we do.” KM bridges the gap between people, processes, and tools which enable knowledge to flow better and be accessible across the organization. SharePoint (SP) is our main sustainment tool within the NCOL CoE & USASMA. It is web based system specifically designed for collaboration and shared document management.

Our Dashboard provides at-a-glance views of the key performance indicators relevant to the NCOL CoE & USASMA. Blackboard (Bb) is another KM tool used as a learning management system. Bb improves facilitation, collaboration, conversation, and engagement between instructional facilitators and students, both resident and nonresident.

Finally, the Army Career Tracker (ACT) is a web-based leadership development tool that provides personalized management of individual training and education. We will continue to employ our legacy management system, ATLAS, until such time as all of its functions can be assumed under other enterprise supported systems of record. Continuous utilization and careful integration of our KM programs will help us in our endeavor in becoming a paperless Academy.

NCO Heritage and Education Center

The primary mission of the US Army Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Heritage and Education Center is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret historically significant property related to the history of the US Army NCO from 1775 to the present. Exhibits portray the role of NCOs from the American Revolution to the present using uniforms, weapons, accoutrements, documents, and equipment from the various periods to historically interpret the evolution of the “Backbone” of the Army, the Non-commissioned Officer Corps.



The NCO Heritage and Education Center supports training, tours and education, conducts research, stimulates esprit de corps and morale, and informs the Army and the public of the NCO’s service to the nation. The NCO Heritage and Education Center is the only Army Heritage and Education Center dedicated solely to NCO History. The NCO Heritage and Education Center has a staff of

three and approximately 10,000 square feet of exhibit space.

Though functionally tied to the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & US Army Sergeants Major Academy, the Center serves the greater Army, Fort Bliss and the 1st Armored Division. AR 870-20 governs this mission.

International Military Student Office



The NCOL CoE & USASMA International Military Student Office (IMSO) directs the operation of the Security Cooperation Education and Training Program (SCETP) objectives, policies and regulatory requirements for USASMA and Fort Bliss. It plans, develops, and executes the SCETP, including the Field Studies Program (FSP), for all International Military Students (IMS) attending training as outlined in the Security Assistance Management Manual (DoD 5103.38-M) and the Joint Security Cooperation Education and Training Regulation (AR 12-15). Using directed automated programs and resources, it assesses, plans, develops, and executes administrative and academic life-cycle

support, FSP support, and strategic communication for all IMS and their authorized accompanying dependents.

The IMSO serves as the subject matter expert on the SCETP and on all International Military Student (IMS) matters. It advises and represents the NCOL CoE & USASMA leadership on all matters pertaining to SCETP, continuously educating senior leadership, faculty, staff and the civilian community about Security Assistance matters in general, and the execution of the SCETP.

The IMSO ensures consistent application of SCETP policies among supported participants at Fort Bliss, and independently plans and directs all operations of a Center of Excellence IMSO, to include budget and manpower; ensuring compliance with financial management directives and policies (TLA Approving Official, GPC Certifying Official, etc.).



Directorate of Educational Technology

The Directorate of Educational Technology (DOET) is responsible for maintaining the architecture, hardware, software, and networking equipment for all educational activities at both NCOL CoE & USASMA and the Fort Bliss NCO Academy. The DOET achieves its mission by ensuring NCOL CoE & USASMA’s staff and students have access to the most up-to-date information technology (IT) in its classrooms and offices, and ensures that these systems are available at all times. The DOET also defends the integrity of the DoD network by providing appropriate access to all IT systems in use at NCOL CoE & USASMA.

The Directorate is divided into programming support, classroom support, systems administration, network support, and help desk functions and is composed of the Director, Deputy Director, five DoD civilians, and six contractors.



The DOET at NCOL CoE & USASMA currently supports over 1800 computers, nearly 1200 military and civilian personnel and has oversight of approximately 8,000 pieces of IT equipment. To stay abreast of technological changes, the DOET works closely with TRADOC, the Combined Arms Center and the Enterprise Classroom Program and all baseline IT equipment at NCOL CoE & USASMA is life cycled after 5 years of service. The more complex systems, namely the classroom audio/ visual systems are replaced on an independent schedule.

Learning Resources Center



The Othon O. Valent Learning Resources Center (LRC) provides library materials and information services to the students, staff, and faculty of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. Collection emphasis is on the Army Noncommissioned Officer Corps, military history, leadership, military science, and management. Primary focus is to encourage scholarly research and to educate our patrons about sources available to them that support the NCOL CoE & USASMA curriculum and their college and university studies.

The LRC maintains a circulating collection of 32,245 items and a reference collection of 2,901 items. The entire holdings collection totals 36,653 items. Unique collections include almost 200 autographed books, 695 unit histories and special collection items. The digital library collection of over 7,000 items include student papers and oral histories. Subscriptions include 136 current periodical titles.

The LRC is currently staffed with one librarian and two library technicians serving an average in-house attendance of 52,710 patrons. Over 4,856 items are circulated every year. Digital resources vary annually based on funding guidance; however, they are heavily used as they provide 24/7 access to students, staff, and faculty as well as family members.

NCOL COE & USASMA SHARP

Sexual Harassment–Sexual Assault–Not in My Academy

The Sexual Harassment Assault Response & Prevention (SHARP) Program is committed to eliminating sexual violence before it begins. We use Unit of Efforts (UOE) to promote a culture where sexist behaviors, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are not tolerated, and four Lines of Efforts (LOEs): advocacy, prevention, awareness, and training. Advocacy aims to empower victims, encourage reporting, and facilitate recovery. With the options of face to face support or dialing the 24 hour Fort Bliss Operating Center (FBOC) SHARP hotline (877-995-5247), confidential advocacy is convenient to access. The most effective



weapon against inappropriate sexual behavior without a doubt is prevention. We use focus groups, discussion groups and realistic “What Would You Do” by standard training as venues to promote this behavior change. In addition to NCOL CoE & USASMA’s anti-harassment policies, the SHARP program has developed a few best practices to support awareness: growing an anti-sexual violence reference section located in the Learning Resources Center; every year in April, NCOL CoE & USASMA dresses in denim to support Denim Day; setting up information booths monthly in high traffic areas around the academy; and providing monthly



ly briefs to installation newcomers with as many as 200 in attendance. We also provide training at NCOL CoE & USASMA’s monthly welcome briefs and to the SMC DDE. This reinforces alignment with changing policies and raises awareness of available resources.

Quality Assurance Office

The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Quality Assurance Office (QAO) conducts continuous, systematic internal and external evaluations of all NCOL CoE & USASMA courses and augments TRADOC with accreditations of Noncommissioned Officer Academies worldwide IAW TRADOC’s established Army Enterprise Accreditation Standards. QAO provides proponent leadership feedback on the Professional Military Education (PME) of NCOs to ensure proficiency and relevancy as the Army transforms during wartime.

The QAO functions as the liaison between NCOL CoE & USASMA, TRADOC and proponent school QAOs/ Quality Assurance Elements (QAEs). QAO advises the NCOL CoE & USASMA Commandant and Directors on the quality assurance process, exceptions to policy, requests for waivers, proponent (Leader Core Competencies) accreditation issues, and related issues, both internal and external. Plans and coordinates the annual Master Evaluation Plan. Designs, elicits faculty input, and develops internal and external surveys for all assigned courses and other NCOL CoE & USASMA organizations as needed. Publishes approved surveys to QAO AKO webpage or provides survey links to students’ email addresses.

The QAO deploys evaluators on TRADOC’s Accreditation Team for BLC, BSNCOC, MLC, ALC-LCC, and SLC-LCC at all NCO Academies, Reserve Component Training Battalions, and Multi-Functional Training Brigades, as applicable. Conducts research and uses evaluation methodologies, statistical analysis and evaluation instruments (i.e., tests and survey instruments, field feedback questionnaires, statistical measurement and software instruments) to predict the effectiveness and efficiency of training implementation, student achievement, and relevance of training products to the operational environment.

The QAO evaluates the analysis, design, development, and implementation phases of the Systems Approach to Training (SAT) to ensure compliance with regulatory guidance; monitors the identification and approval of critical tasks, the use of task analysis data as the foundation of the training, and implementation of sound management practices. Analyzes concepts, plans, and actions, conducts research, coordinates information for input, and provides feedback on evaluation of training development, doctrine development, and Combat development interface, curricula, methodology, and effectiveness/efficiency of the SAT process.

Chaplain

The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence & U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy’s Ethics Advisor (Staff Chaplain) serves as the Sergeants Major Course Ethics Instructor and Staff Chaplain. As Chaplain, he provides religious support to the Soldiers, Civilians, and Family members of the NCOL CoE & USASMA Community. He advises the leader-





ship to ensure the ‘free exercise’ rights for all Soldiers are upheld—including those who hold no faith. The Chaplain also performs religious support activities according to his/her faith and conscience and provides religious support of other faith groups by coordinating with another chaplain or qualified individual to perform the support needed.

Additionally, the Chaplain provides counseling, training, and ministry of presence throughout the many different activities within the Fort Bliss and NCOL CoE & USASMA Community. He leads prayer at official ceremonies including graduations, distinguished service recognition ceremonies, award presentations, and other observances. The Chaplain is in charge of USASMA Memorial Chapel and leads the Protestant Weekly Worship service.

Visitor Coordination Office (Protocol)

The Visitor Coordination Office plans, coordinates and executes guests visits to NCOL CoE & USASMA; advises staff and faculty in the proper use of protocol procedures; serves as liaison with DOD agencies, installation activities, international organizations and local community activities for appropriate arrangements; and provides instruction in the Spouse Leadership Development Course.



Legal Assistant

The Paralegal NCO provides legal/administrative support in areas of criminal law, family law, international law, contract law, and fiscal law. The Paralegal NCO supports the Commandant and the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

Support is given by providing legal documents for courts-martial, non-judicial punishments, and other military justice matters.

The Paralegal NCO prepares line of duty determinations, separation board proceeding, legal reviews and other administrative law matters. The Paralegal NCO also provides legal assistance, such as powers of attorney and notary services.

SPECIAL STAFF

Command Communications



The mission of Command Communications is to tell the NCOL CoE & USASMA story to the various publics, both internal and external, by means of media relations, public relations, community relations, internal communications and social media. Command Communications informs the publics and stakeholders about NCOL CoE & USASMA’s mission –To provide professional military education that develops enlisted leaders to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world –and its role in the development, maintenance, instruction, and distribution of five levels of Enlisted Professional Military Education –Introductory, Primary, Intermediate, Senior and Executive.

Command Communications tools include the NCOL CoE & USASMA website, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and photo archives on Flickr. The office develops written and video news products as well as high quality graphics in the form of posters, handouts and informational packets.



FORT BLISS NCO ACADEMY



The Fort Bliss Noncommissioned Officer Academy (NCOA) provides exceptional training to qualified NCOs. Our goal is to provide relevant and challenging course material that will better prepare junior NCOs at the next level. The NCO Professional Development System (NCOPDS) is the keystone for NCO development. As such, the Fort Bliss NCOA establishes the framework to develop the next generation of competent and committed leaders.

The Basic Leader Course (BLC) is the first step in the NCOPDS. BLC is a branch-immaterial course that provides basic leadership training. BLC provides Soldiers an opportunity to acquire the leader skills, knowledge, and experience needed to lead team-level size units. Training includes basic leadership skills, NCO duties, responsibilities and authority, and how to conduct performance-oriented training. BLC produces competent junior NCOs who are qualified team/section leaders,

trainers of leader and war fighting skills, evaluators and counselors.

The Master Leader Course (MLC) is the fourth step in the NCOPDS. MLC is a branch-immaterial course that provides an opportunity for Soldiers selected for promotion to MSG to acquire the leader skills required for success at both troop and staff assignments throughout the defense establishment. The MLC produces competent senior NCOs who will have the knowledge and experience to successfully serve at all echelons within the Department of Defense.







# THE NCO LEADERSHIP CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

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& U.S. ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY

**DRIVING CHANGE FOR NCO AND ENLISTED  
SOLDIER EDUCATION SINCE 1972**